

Thoracic News



THE NEWSLETTER OF MAIN LINE HEALTHCARE THORACIC SURGERY

Only 7% of all lung cancer operations in the U.S. are performed using minimally invasive surgical techniques

Main Line Health is one center in the U.S. routinely using minimally invasive techniques to treat lung cancer.

Lung cancer accounts for 40% of all cancer deaths in the U.S. The number of lung cancer deaths annually is more than the number of colon, prostate and breast cancer patients combined.¹ Despite the number of new cases diagnosed annually, only 7% of all lung cancer operations in the U.S. are performed in a minimally invasive fashion. Minimally invasive lung surgery is also known as VATS or Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery. It is typically performed through three or four one-inch incisions, one of which is enlarged to 4 cm (2 inches) to allow removal of the lung tissue. No rib spreading is performed. VATS procedures are performed with the same oncologic principles used as in open surgery; namely individual ligation of hilar structures (pulmonary artery, vein, and bronchus) and mediastinal lymph node dissection.

Lung lesions amenable for VATS resection include those that are physiologically resectable, those less than or equal to 6 cm in size, and peripheral lesions. VATS techniques are now successfully being applied to pneumonectomies (complete removal of one lung) and those tumors with chest wall invasion.

The benefits of minimally invasive procedures are well established. VATS patients typically have less pain, fewer pulmonary complications, shorter hospitalizations and a faster return to work. The average national LOS for a VATS lobectomy is 4 days, compared to 7 days for a thoracotomy.² Long term survival for early stage lung cancer treated with VATS is slightly better than for open surgery. This may be due to a decreased cytokine response.³

Here at MLH, a team of thoracic surgeons, with over 45 years of experience combined, perform minimally invasive lung surgery routinely, including lobectomies, anatomic segmental resections, and lung biopsies. Besides use for lung cancer, VATS techniques are used for excising metastases to the lung from other organs, such as the kidney and colon, resection of fungal infections, and biopsies of the chest and mediastinum.

¹American Cancer Society 2009, www.cancer.org.

²*Annals of Thoracic Surgery* 2011 Dec 92(6):1951-7.

³*Surgical Endoscopy* 2007, 21:1607-11.

Next issue: Robotics and Thoracic Surgery!



Main Line HealthCare
Physician Network

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SMOKING CESSATION SUPPORT

SmokeFREE is a free Main Line Health program to help smokers quit the habit. Participants may be eligible to receive FREE Nicotine replacement therapy.

Upcoming Dates:

October 24, 31

November 1, 14, 21, 28

December 5, 12, 19

Riddle Hospital, Health Center 4
Conference Room 2

1068 West Baltimore Pike

Media, PA 19063 | 6 to 8 pm

To register, call 484.227.3635.

October 22, 29

November 5, 12, 19

Chester County Library
Burke Meeting Room, 2nd floor

450 Exton Square Parkway

Exton, PA 19341 | 2 to 3 pm

To register, call 484.337.8329.

The American Cancer Society has free information to help with smoking cessation. Call 1.800.ACS.2345, or visit the web site, www.cancer.org. For more information on lung cancer, please visit the National Cancer Institute web site at www.cancer.gov.



Shown left to right: Michael J. Walker, MD;
Ned Z. Carp, MD; Alicia A. McKelvey, MD

To schedule appointments and learn more about Main Line Health Thoracic Surgery visit mainlinehealth.org/thoracic.